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The bill (HR 2176), rejected by a vote of 121-298, had the support of some Michigan lawmakers who said it would help the state's economy. However, opponents — including other members from Michigan — said the bill would set a dangerous precedent encouraging other tribes to pursue casinos away from their own lands.

"Let's not set a trend. Let's not use Indian tribes in order to dot the urban and suburban communities of this country with monopoly gambling operations," said John Campbell, R-Calif.

Bill supporter Candice S. Miller, R-Mich., said, "Clearly, most of the opposition to this bill comes from people who already have theirs and don't want others to have it. They don't want competition. And I think that's un-American."

The bill would have allowed the American Indian tribes to swap 110 acres of land in Michigan's Upper Peninsula for property close to Detroit and its suburbs. The land would be put in trust held by the federal government.

The bill, sponsored by Bart Stupak

, D-Mich., would have given the Bay Mills Indian Community land rights in Port Huron. It incorporated another measure (HR 4115), sponsored by John D. Dingell

, D-Mich., that would have given the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians land in either Flint or Romulus.

In 2002, both tribes entered into agreements with the state to own land in southeast Michigan. But congressional action was necessary to make the swap official because states do not have the authority to terminate tribal land rights.

The Natural Resources Committee overwhelmingly approved both bills in February. However, the Judiciary Committee unanimously voted in April to report the bills negatively. That committee is chaired by John Conyers Jr., a Democrat from Detroit.

Conyers called the bill “disingenuous” and said it would address “the so-called land claim laid moribund and forgotten for 100 years.”

“We’re going to have the biggest casino forum shopping this country has ever known,” he warned.

In a forceful statement, Dingell said opponents were trying to eliminate competition for casinos already operating in the Detroit area.

“They want to protect and preserve their outrageous monopoly on gambling. That’s what’s at stake,” Dingell said.

He added that the legislation “follows, it does not set, congressional precedent in dealing with Indian land claim settlements” and would “bring desperately needed jobs to Southeast Michigan.”